

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
SAN FRANCISCO

January 17, 1985



DIANNE FEINSTEIN

INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENTAL
STUDIES LIBRARY

JAN 28 1985

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

The Honorable
Board of Supervisors
235 City Hall
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

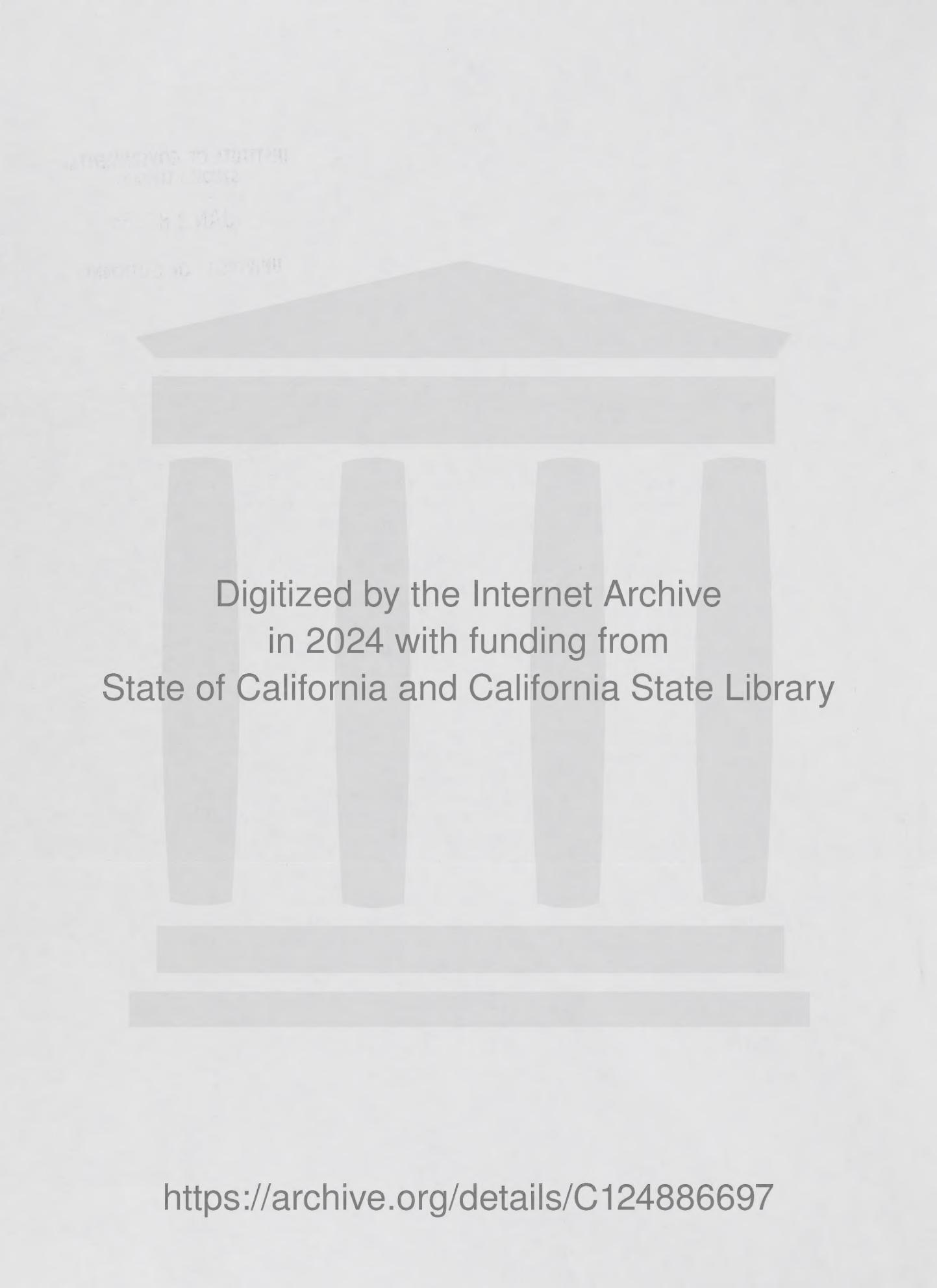
I am returning File No. 422-84, a resolution opposing the homeporting of a Surface Action Group in San Francisco, with my disapproval.

I listened carefully to the arguments in favor of this resolution and find them unconvincing and, in some cases, just plain wrong. I thank the stalwart five on the Board of Supervisors, John Molinari, Quentin Kopp, Bill Maher, Wendy Nelder and Louise Renne, for also rejecting the arguments of those who would close our Golden Gate to the United States Navy.

Though an occasional argument about safety or economic benefits was made in your debate, the underlying theme of the resolution is that homeporting of United States naval vessels - and thus participation in the defense of our Nation - violates the spirit of a bilateral, verifiable nuclear freeze, and that a refusal by San Francisco to assist the Navy in locating a naval station in the City would somehow send a message to Washington to end the current arms race.

In my opinion, this resolution will in no way abate or control the use of nuclear weapons, achieve a freeze, or stop deployment of the Cruise missile and refitting of the USS Missouri. If allowed to become City policy, it could, however, result in the Navy rejecting San Francisco as a home port, cost our local economy more than \$130,000,000 a year in naval expenditures and payrolls, and mean that up to 1,600 direct and another 2,000 indirect jobs would not be created.

More importantly, the resolution would, in effect, tell the United States Navy that naval vessels, their sailors aboard, and their families ashore are unwelcome in San Francisco. It would effectively undo five years of civic efforts to encourage the Navy to homeport additional ships in the San Francisco Bay Area, and to show men and women in the military our thanks, warmth, and hospitality. A majority of this Board of Supervisors is saying, in essence, that San Francisco intends to refuse to do its share in the national defense but wants other cities to do so. This is not the San Francisco I know and respect.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024 with funding from
State of California and California State Library

<https://archive.org/details/C124886697>

The Honorable
Board of Supervisors
January 17, 1985
Page 2

Why have we been encouraging homeporting? Because ships mean blue-collar jobs. Our ship repair and overhaul industry is the weak link in what has otherwise been a robust economy. To be quite blunt, our shipyards are in the midst of a depression - one that has cost 5,000 men and women their jobs during the last decade - one that has seen a naval shipyard, which employed 5,400 workers (48% of whom were minority), now leased to a private operator, which currently employs only 200. Yet, this is in an industry where 40% of the employees are residents of San Francisco.

These ships also mean a significant increase in jobs, business activity and tax revenues for San Francisco and the entire Bay Area. The San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, rebutting your Budget Analyst, estimated that the tax revenues to San Francisco alone would reimburse the General Fund for both the initial and ongoing costs to the City associated with homeporting. And, even the Budget Analyst admits that the economic benefits to the Bay Area as a whole would be significant. The Chamber study is not based on the promises made to any other port - it is based on conservative estimates of payroll, supply purchases and ship repair expenditures expected from this proposed homeporting.

Then why are six members of the Board of Supervisors proposing to reverse our course? A reading of the resolution does not clearly answer that question.

The majority of the Board of Supervisors now is of the opinion that the homeporting of the USS Missouri would "...expose the City to a first-strike attack in the event of a nuclear war." With the presence of a Polaris missile launching submarine repair facility, a major weapons depot, two naval air stations, the Alameda homeporting of two nuclear aircraft carriers, satellite communications facilities, and numerous other military installations, including Treasure Island and the Presidio in San Francisco, the City's designation as a first-strike target was decided one way or the other years ago. The fact is that, today, nuclear propelled and nuclear armed naval vessels enter, leave, and berth in San Francisco Bay regularly.

The fact is that the USS Missouri would take almost two weeks to steam from San Francisco to a location from which her missiles could reach distant targets. In a time of escalating international tensions, it is most likely that she would be deployed far from San Francisco most of each year.

The Honorable
Board of Supervisors
January 17, 1985
Page 3

The Board has further determined that homeporting "...exposes its residents to an unacceptable risk of nuclear accidents and to terrorist threats".

What evidence is this supposition based upon? The Board has been informed that there has never been a nuclear accident resulting in injury to a civilian or civilian property in the United States. As the Board knows, I requested and received, along with Supervisor Molinari, a nuclear safety briefing. From that briefing, we learned that:

- 1) A Tomahawk missile cannot be armed in port and, in fact, cannot detonate until it reaches a predetermined target. Its range is too short to be used in this half of the Pacific Ocean. Additionally, it is terrain guided, not water guided.
- 2) The basic technology of the weapon system and its safety systems militates against any adverse effects beyond the weapon casing.
- 3) Terrorist acts, fire, explosion or other outside force cannot cause a weapon to detonate.
- 4) Safeguards against radioactive leaks are carefully built into the specific technology of this system.

If I had any information that would have raised the slightest doubt about safety to our residents, I would have asked the Navy to reconsider its designation of San Francisco as a possible home port. In fact, I have requested from every opponent of homeporting any evidence of safety risk. Not one person has come forward to respond with written documentation that the weapons pose a risk to San Francisco, including three Bay Area Congresspersons I specifically asked.

Though no credible basis exists for the Board's findings, the resolution would have it be the policy of San Francisco "...to oppose the deployment of nuclear weapons, in whatever form and for whatever reason, in the City and County of San Francisco." If taken seriously by the Navy, that policy would prevent the homeporting of any combatant-type naval vessel in San Francisco inasmuch as every combatant vessel in the United States Navy is nuclear-capable, or will be by summer. That includes carriers, cruisers, frigates, destroyers, submarines, etc. These ships are in and out of major American ports - including San Francisco Bay - right now. They can be equipped with either nuclear and/or conventional weapon systems.

What this resolution is really suggesting is that we "blacklist" the Navy from San Francisco. That is unacceptable to me, and I believe unacceptable to the vast majority of San Franciscans.

The Honorable
Board of Supervisors
January 17, 1985
Page 4

The Navy has been present and made welcome by San Franciscans since the admission of California into the Union. And San Franciscans, recognizing their patriotic duty to participate in the national defense, have always answered the call to assist in the defense of our Nation, both individually and as fine hosts and hostesses to our Nation's soldiers and sailors. Four successive Fleet Weeks have brought an outpouring of public support, and hundreds of thousands of Bay Area residents, including tens of thousands of San Franciscans, have visited naval vessels (many of them nuclear) here.

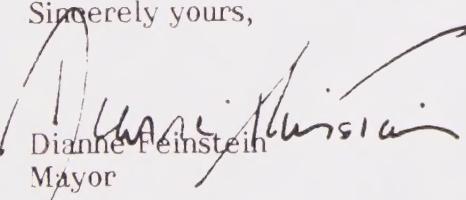
Let me make clear what the process is. My proposal is in response to a Navy designation of San Francisco as a potential Surface Action Group homeport. If the Navy's preliminary designation is San Francisco, the Navy begins a period of environmental evaluation (approximately 1&1/2 years), and based on that evaluation, renders a final designation. If San Francisco were designated, then construction on the base would begin and continue for two years, after which the battle group would arrive -- in approximately 1989. Clearly, this resolution is also premature in prejudging safety prior to all environmental evaluations.

What then is the real purpose behind this resolution? Why does the Board now suggest we close San Francisco to the Navy? Why is the Board, just seven months after unanimously "adopting" the nuclear-carrier USS Carl Vinson as "San Francisco's Own," doing an about-face and opposing the USS Missouri? Why is the Board willing to deny the economic benefits these ships would bring to thousands of San Franciscans even before the environmental study is begun? Answer: Because a highly organized nuclear freeze movement - one many of us support if it continues to advocate a bilateral freeze - seeks to make San Francisco a symbol, to use us to send a message to the Congress and the President.

I do not believe that such a symbolic message need be sent on the backs of our unemployed shipyard workers. It does not have to be sent to our Congressional representatives who are strong supporters of the freeze movement and reductions in defense spending. It does not have to be sent to the United States Navy which will refit and homeport this Surface Action Group as long as a Congress and a President under our Nation's Constitution find it necessary to the national defense.

This is not the way to achieve nuclear control and arms reduction. The way is to keep this country strong while making every effort to successfully negotiate arms limitation and reduction agreements. That, more than any resolution by this or any other Board of Supervisors, will enable our children to avoid the scourge of a nuclear conflagration.

Sincerely yours,


Dianne Feinstein
Mayor

DF/JLL:ip

U.C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES



C124886697